

Arizona Influenza Pandemic Response Plan Questions & Answers (2/8/06)

Why did you develop a statewide plan for an influenza pandemic?

An influenza pandemic is likely to occur sometime in the future. Arizona needs to be prepared to ensure that we have an effective response so that we can lessen the impact of an influenza pandemic. The fact that the state has a plan does not mean that the current avian flu virus is considered to have a high potential to become a pandemic strain, but the avian flu outbreak is a reminder that a pandemic could occur and that we as a state need to be prepared.

How is the Arizona plan organized?

The Arizona Influenza Pandemic Response Plan

<http://www.azdhs.gov/pandemicflu/index.htm> uses the same organizational format as the United States Department of Health and Human Services Plan www.pandemicflu.gov.

The Arizona Plan has a similar outline as the Federal plan so that it will be easy to ensure that pandemic planning efforts are well coordinated. The Arizona Plan also uses the World Health Organization Pandemic Planning Periods and Phases so that implementing the plan will be consistent regarding the appropriate capabilities, and the roles & responsibilities needed to respond to the different periods.

What organizations play a lead role during an influenza pandemic?

While a pandemic response is primarily a public health response, many agencies, organizations, and private institutions will need to work in a coordinated and collaborative manner to ensure an effective overall response in Arizona. The following organizations will have a role to play in the coordinated response:

- The ADHS is the lead agency for preparedness and response to an influenza pandemic in Arizona.
- Local health departments (including county and tribal health departments) are the critical local response entities and should be the center of gravity for community level planning.
- Emergency management and homeland security agencies will be important for ensuring overall coordination of government resources.
- First responder agencies have important manpower and logistical resources that will be necessary for ensuring the safety of individuals and communities.
- Hospitals and healthcare institutions will be the frontline of a pandemic and are essential planning partners at the local and state level.
- Volunteer agencies are always important partners in emergency response activities.

The plan is 375 pages long, how should I get started?

The overview of the plan provides a general background of the response activities and is geared to people that are not in the public health field. The Plan also contains a series of

Supplements are subject-area specific and provide very detailed planning and response activities. They are designed to help people in the field of public health or health care focus their planning on areas that are important to them. For example: the Healthcare Coordination and Surge Capacity Supplement is designed to help health care providers to plan for the increase in services that will occur during a pandemic.

How does the plan address vaccines?

Currently, there are no pandemic-specific vaccines available. Due to the nature of vaccine production, it may take six months or more to develop an effective vaccine for the public after a pandemic starts. The federal government, however, is spearheading efforts to develop new methods for vaccine development so as to be able to more rapidly produce vaccine at the outset of the identification of a pandemic. In the case that limited vaccine is available, Arizona will convene an expert committee to develop the prioritization strategy for the disbursement of the vaccine. If wide-scale vaccines are available, the plan calls for a combination of the existing private system for vaccination as well as the locally-driven mass vaccinations systems, developed by the county health departments in Arizona, to get the vaccine out to the public as quickly as possible. See supplement 6 for more information.

What does the plan say about stockpiling antiviral drugs?

Arizona does not currently have its own stockpile of antiviral drugs. The state has received some funds for developing local caches associated with hospitals and is currently drafting plans on the appropriate purchase and distribution of those caches. Antiviral drugs are not the focus of the plan as these drugs may not be effective against a pandemic strain, but they are an important tool for treating influenza patients. The plan focuses on the use of antivirals for treatment, with the potential for limited use for prophylaxis. For more information on the use of antivirals see Supplement 7.

Is isolation and quarantine a part of the state's plan?

Yes, isolation and quarantine are valuable tools for preventing or slowing disease transmission. Isolation is primarily a healthcare action to prevent exposure to known infected cases. Quarantine is a public health action used to separate exposed from non-exposed individuals, to help prevent further transmission. The use of quarantine in a pandemic response maybe limited and will probably cease after the number of local pandemic cases increases in a community. A series of other types of community disease control measures will be used once that happens. For more information on community disease control, see Supplement 8.

Will the Plan be revised periodically?

Yes. The ADHS will be soliciting input on the Plan through a series of Regional Pandemic Influenza Coordinating committee meetings that will be held throughout 2006. You can register to participate in the Regional Pandemic Influenza Coordinating Committees at: http://pub.hs.state.az.us/pandemic/registration/m_form1.cfm. The Plan is an "evergreen" document that will be updated with changes as we gather input from the Coordinating Committees.

Do other agencies and organizations need a plan, or does the state's plan cover everything?

No, the state's plan refers primarily to government, specifically public health agency preparedness and response activities. All agencies, organizations, hospitals, schools, churches, and families should have a plan. If a pandemic were to occur, every sector of society would be affected. A plan can be as simple as writing a checklist of things to do to get prepared. The ADHS Pandemic Flu website (www.azdhs.gov/pandemicflu) has several checklists, including for families, businesses, and churches, and other planning material that will be useful in developing your plan.

What other information is available?

Many agencies, organizations, and private institutions will need to work in a coordinated and collaborative manner to ensure an effective overall response in Arizona. Our pandemic flu overall Plan and the www.azdhs.gov/pandemicflu website is written so that organizations will be able to use the report to support their own planning activities. There is also helpful planning information at the US Department of Health and Human Services website at www.pandemicflu.gov.

How do I find out more about what is happening in my community?

Local health departments will be charged with coordinating community level planning. You can contact your local health department for more information. At a regional level, you can register to participate in the Regional Pandemic Influenza Coordinating Committees at: http://pub.hs.state.az.us/pandemic/registration/m_form1.cfm. Also, ADHS will continually update the www.azdhs.gov/pandemicflu website with state, regional, and local activities.